

**TOWN OF SALEM
RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Alan Maziarz, Chairperson
Art Bergman
Mary Jean Blezard
Mary Durkee
Jessica Fletcher
Crispin Fresco-Hawes

ABSENT

Amanda Lawrence

1. Call to Order

Chairman Maziarz called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Act on a Motion to Approve the Minutes of November 15, 2021

M/S/C: Durkee/Blezard, to approve the Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2021, with the following amendment:

9(f) Salem Basketball – MPR Backboard Renovation Update – last sentence

It was noted that the school ~~does not utilize~~ *utilizes* the Multi-Purpose Room for basketball.

Discussion: Chairman Maziarz noted that former First Selectman Lyden did attend the meeting and expressed his support for the Disc Golf Course. Voice vote, 5-0-1. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Bergman, Blezard, Durkee, Fresco-Hawes, and Maziarz. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioner Fletcher.

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

The following items were removed from the Agenda as the relevant parties were unable to attend this evening's meeting:

- Item 9 (a) Bob Appleby Memorial – Sue Spang & Dave Kennedy
- (d) Holiday Decorating / Tree Lighting Contest

4. Public Comment/Guests/Correspondence

Disc Golf Consultant Shawn Callaghan commented on the recent “unilateral” activities that have compromised the design of the Disc Golf Course and the lack of communication with those who designed and constructed the course. He is hoping that a moratorium on any additional activities can be placed and that an open dialogue could take place between the

relevant parties so that they could work together and move forward on this great community project that they hope will continue to grow.

5. Report on the Budget: Alan Maziarz

To date, 51% of their budget has been expended, with their maintenance line being fully expended due to increased expenses for the porta-potties. Chairman Maziarz thanked the Commissioners for their input regarding the Capital Plan requests and reported that the requests were submitted to the Board of Finance for review. The Fiscal Year 2022/23 proposed budget will be included on a future agenda for discussion and review.

6. Recreation Program Coordinator's Report: Agnes Miyuki

New, upcoming classes include:

AARP Driver Safety Class

Tuesday, August 16, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Salem Volunteer Fire Company

CodeWiz – Online Coding Classes for children ages 7 to 17

In response to former Commissioner Natoli, Recreation Program Coordinator Miyuki reported that no activities are being offered for children during the winter break, though she is open to offering activities in the future should the Commission feel it beneficial.

7. Public Works Report: Don Bourdeau, Tony Gallicchio

Chairman Maziarz reported that their point of contact for Public Works is Foreman Gallicchio, who is currently on extended medical leave. He has submitted a request for updates on the previously submitted Citizen Request Forms.

Commissioner Bergman expressed his dismay that a representative from the Public Works Department has been unable to attend their meetings. Chairman Maziarz also expressed his disappointment and stated that he did speak with Foreman Gallicchio about the possibility of attending their meetings and/or working together to provide updates – neither of which have materialized. As a result, he has been submitting the Citizen Request Forms.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Dog Park – Committee Update (LOI, Location)

Chairman Maziarz reported that a Letter of Intent will be drafted for the First Selectman's signature. The project will be placed on hold for the time being.

b. Trails & Kiosk/Info Center –Emergency Trail Markers

Chairman Maziarz reported that the Commission will be partnering with the Salem Land Trust to discuss the trail markers and kiosk/info centers to ensure the uniformity of the signage at/along all of the trails in town.

Commissioner Bergman stated that he will investigate whether the Eagle Scouts would be able to attend their January meeting to discuss the creation and placement of the emergency trail markers. Former Commissioner Natoli showed a photograph of a kiosk at one of the preserves in Old Lyme as another possible design option. The possibility of having the materials for the kiosk donated was also raised.

c. Disc Golf – Update & Subcommittee Plan

First Selectman Chmielewski thanked the Chairman and the Commissioners for their service and enthusiasm. He also expressed his appreciation to the Commission and its many volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to design and construct the Disc Golf Course. The Course has, in some ways, led them to uncharted territory and questions regarding the process, maintenance and, above all, safety of the Course and its elements have been raised. He reported that the town's Safety Committee reviewed the Course and identified some safety concerns. In the interest of the public's safety and based on the input of their insurance carrier, the town has decided to temporarily close the Course to resolve the issues. He suggested forming a subcommittee that would have the support of the Office of the First Selectman, Town Hall and Public Works staff, et al, as well as the financial support of the town to resolve the safety issues. He reiterated the importance of providing a safe environment for the public.

Chairman Maziarz requested a list of the safety concerns and the written record of the complaint, which the First Selectman did not have in hand. In response to Chairman Maziarz who questioned the existence of the Safety Committee, First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the Safety Committee is an internal town committee that reviews the safety of the town's facilities. Chairman Maziarz expressed his lack of trust with the First Selectman and requested a meeting with the Safety Committee to discuss the issues. First Selectman Chmielewski thanked the Commissioners for their support and stated that he had twice extended an invitation to meet with him to discuss and resolve the issues, which Chairman Maziarz has declined. Commissioner Blezard stated that the Commission was not aware of any issues at the Course. Commissioner Fletcher stated that they have invested a lot of time, energy, and money into the project and would prefer to discuss the issues at present rather than forming a subcommittee and prolonging the process. She requested the Commission be privy to the proper documentation showing the origin of the complaints and the list of safety concerns, which would be more helpful than a private meeting between himself and the Chairman. First Selectman Chmielewski reiterated his willingness to meet and work together to remedy the issues.

Chairman Maziarz also questioned the responsible party for the damage caused to the river on the property and expressed his dismay with the town's handling of issues that inadvertently fall upon the Commission's responsibility. He further commented on the lack of teamwork. He thanked the First Selectman for attending the meeting and wished

him a good evening. First Selectman Chmielewski returned the appreciation and exited the meeting.

The Commissioners, Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission (IWCC) Chairperson Kim Bradley, Vice-Chairperson Diba Khan-Bureau, and Commissioner Ed Natoli, and Disc Golf Consultants, Designers, and Builders Shawn Callaghan and Rob LeMire engaged in an extensive discussion regarding the Disc Golf Course, lack of communication, the timeline of events, presumed safety issues, dynamics of the sport, and potential and/or lack of liability.

IWCC Chairperson Bradley reported on the timeline of events that took place with respect to the placement of gravel along the dam area of the river and its associated violation and stated that the ZWEO has requested that the town cease any further activity on the property. She expressed her appreciation to the Commission for informing her of the activity. For the record, she stated her background and experience with other recreational entities throughout the State. She commended the Commission's accomplishment with the Disc Golf Course and agreed that the best way to resolve the issue is through an open discussion that would allow them to move forward in a positive manner.

In addition to requesting the documentation showing the origin of the complaints and the list of safety concerns, former Commissioner Natoli proposed the possibility of also requesting the name of the individual who claimed to have been hit by a disc while on the trails.

IWCC Commissioner Ed Natoli suggested that the Commission request or petition for a public meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

Disc Golf Designer LeMire noted that the Course has received positive feedback since its opening. Based on the UDisc App, 884 individuals have indicated as having played the course in the month of November. In comparison, Nichols Field in East Haddam was played by 78 individuals. He expressed their wish to remedy the issues and address the concerns so that the Course can reopen in Spring 2022. They are currently in the process of drafting signage regarding the Rules of Play and creating a Lost & Found box.

Chairman Maziarz thanked the members of the IWCC and Disc Golf Consultant and Designer Callaghan and LeMire for their time, energy, support, and passion. He also apologized for his behavior and the lack of discussion and progress to resolve the issues.

IWCC Chairperson Bradley recommended that the Disc Golf Collaborative track the number of volunteers and their donated hours to demonstrate that the course would be maintained by the volunteers and that town resources would not be used.

Commissioner Fletcher was tasked with acquiring a specific, actionable list from the Insurance Company and the town. A draft of the signage stating the Rules of Play and

courtesy signage, lost and found box, and other courses that have or have not had any incidents, and other supporting material will be gathered.

d. Forsyth Volunteer Pavilion – Planning

1) Ice Rink/Volleyball 2021 – Location/Project Plan (LOI/PZ/ILWL)

The project will be placed on hold for the time being.

e. Pickleball – Repaint, New Proposal

Chairman Maziarz provided a brief recap of the status of the repainting of the tennis court, which would cost approximately \$2,000.00, which is less than half the usual cost, to correct the vendor's error. Commissioner Blezard proposed they request the vendor contact the Commission to allow them to supervise the project.

M/S/C: Maziarz/Blezard, to allocate \$2,000.00 to re-line, stripe, and paint Tennis Court I in Spring 2022. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

f. Round Hill Recreation Complex – Amenities & Path Update

Chairman Maziarz reported that a Citizen Complaint Form has been submitted.

Commissioner Fletcher departed from the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

g. Adult Kickball – Spring Session

Pick-up games will be scheduled beginning mid-May 2022. The possibility of partnering with neighboring towns was proposed.

h. COVID Relief Funds – General Requests

Chairman Maziarz reported that he was appointed as a member of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Committee, which will be tasked to review and discuss the funding requests.

i. Holiday Event 2021 – Recap

A very well-attended, successful, and safe Holiday Tree Lighting event was held. Chairman Maziarz thanked former Commissioner Natoli for providing the hot cocoa, Commissioners Blezard for preparing the gift bags, and Fletcher for providing the cookies and all of the Commissioners' help. Freddie Marion entertained children and their families inside the Center School and Santa was greeted by the attendees outside as the Honors student volunteers offered cookies and cocoa. The possibility of hosting the event outdoors in the future was briefly discussed.

j. IWL – Harris Brook Connector Bridge Repair Update

Chairman Maziarz reported that the discussion regarding the Harris Brook Bridge was tabled to the IWCC January Regular Meeting due to a scheduled training session. A brief overview of the history of the bridge was provided and the need to clearly define and finalize the trail to the Round Hill Road fields was stated. Former Commissioner Natoli

expressed her appreciation to IWCC Chairperson Bradley for attending their meetings and providing input.

k. Spring Concert – Planning Stage

Recreation Coordinator Miyuki reported that Sid's Auto Parts' Sal Sena, Jr., contacted the Recreation Department expressing an interest in sponsorship. She proposed, and the Commissioners agreed, to request his sponsorship for one of the concerts. The Commissioners agreed to discuss the selection of the band and possible food truck options during their next meeting. The concert will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2022.

l. Disc Golf – May Grand Opening Event Plan

The event is to be determined and will be moved under 8(c) in future agendas.

1. Salem Basketball – MPR Backboard Renovation Update

Chairman Maziarz reported that Salem Basketball requested the Recreation Commission's financial support for the purchase and installation of basketball backboards in Salem School's Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). Salem Basketball has agreed to contribute approximately \$2,600.00 and has requested that the Commission contribute the remaining \$4,000.00. East Lyme Youth Basketball will not be contributing any funds for the project. The current balance in the Salem Basketball account is less than \$6,000.00. It was noted that Salem Youth Basketball has not received any funds from the Commission over the past two to three years. The backboards will be received this week and installed during the School's winter break.

M/S/C: Bergman/Fresco-Hawes, to allocate \$4,000.00 for the purchase and installation of the Salem School's Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) basketball backboards. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

Chairman Maziarz reported that, while installing the basketball hoops in the Salem School Gymnasium last weekend, the worm drive broke causing the backboard to fall just above his head. JayPro is currently repairing the mechanism. He proposed having the hoops maintained annually to avoid any future accidents from occurring. The hoops were installed approximately two years ago.

9. New Business

a. Bob Appleby Memorial – Sue Spang & Dave Kennedy – *tabled*

b. Meeting Dates for 2022 (through January 2023)

The Commissioners agreed to approve the following 2022 Meeting Dates:

January 24, February 28, March 21, April 25, May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19, and January 23.

The January, February, and April meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month due to the Martin Luther King, Presidents' Day, and Spring break holidays.

c. Budget/Capital Requests – *see item 5*

d. Holiday Decorating/Tree Lighting Contest

Debbie Delorimiere offered to sponsor the Holiday Decorating Contest, but due to a recent death in the family, was unable to attend this evening's meeting to finalize the details; she will be contacting the Chairman in the coming days. Correspondence regarding the Commissioners requests, including ensuring that the submissions are from Salem residents, no addresses are to be shared with the public unless volunteered by the participant, and that the Commissioners select the judges were shared with her. A request was also made to include the prizes and submission details on the flyer. The Contest will not be held this year should Ms. Delorimiere not be able to sponsor the event.

10. Adjournment

M/S/C: Fresco-Hawes/Maziarz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem